

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 EUR-25 SAM-01 AID-20 DRC-01 IO-14 /155 W

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P 011055Z SEP 74

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2908

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0715

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ET

SUBJECT: GENERAL AMAN AND THE ELF

REF: ASMARA 0711

1. SUMMARY: WITH HIS ERITREAN VISIT MORE THAN HALF OVER, LT GENERAL AMAN MICHAEL ANDOM, THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, APPEARS TO BE CONDUCTING A "MEET THE PEOPLE" TOUR, RATHER THAN SEEKING SERIOUSLY TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE SEPARATIST PROBLEM HERE.

2. ON BASIS CONVERSATIONS WITH GENERAL AMAN HIMSELF, HIS CHIEF OF STAFF, COL. YILMA TESHOME, GENERAL BELETE, ACTING OIC 2ND DIVISION, VICE GOVGEN KEGN. TESFAILDET GHERED, ASSISTANT GOVERNOR FIT. TEWOLDE TEDLA, AND THE SUDANESE CONSUL GENERAL, SAYED EL FATIH ABDULLAH YOUSIF, IT IS CLEAR THAT GENERAL AMAN DOES NOT, RPT, NOT INTEND, IN THE COURSE OF THIS VISIT, TO SEEK OUT OR HOLD CONVERSATIONS WITH ANY ELF REPRESENTATIVES. NO CONTACT HAS YET BEEN MADE, AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY WILL BE. THE APPROACH BEING TAKEN IS THAT
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THE GENERAL IS PREPARED TO MEET WITH ANYONE WHO TAKE THE INITI-

ATIVE TO SEE HIM, BUT THAT HE WILL NOT SEEK OUT ANYONE. TO DATE, GENERAL AMAN HAS VISITED MILITARY UNITS IN ASMARA, AND IN OUTLYING AREAS IN ERITREA. HE ADDRESSED THE PEOPLE OF ASMARA (REFTEL) AND HE HAS TALKED DIRECTLY WITH THE ELDERS AND WITH THE PEOPLE, TRYING TO ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INTENTIONS OF THE IEG/AFCC.

3. THE GENERAL PRESENTLY PLANS TO RETURN LATE NEXT WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, TO ADDIS ABABA, WHERE HE WILL SUBMIT HIS REPORT TO THE IEG/AFCC. HE WILL ALSO CONSULT WITH THE NEW GOVGEN DESIGNATE OF ERITREA, ATO EMANUEL ANDEMICAEL, AND BRIEF HIM ON THE SITUATION AS HE FOUND IT. ATO EMMANUEL WILL COME TO ASMARA WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS TO TAKE UP HIS NEW DUTIES, AND THE POLITICAL TASK OF TRYING TO DEAL WITH THE ELF WILL APPARENTLY DEVOLVE ON HIM. IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE ARMY IS STILL APPROACHING THE ERITREAN PROBLEM AS A MILITARY QUESTION, AND BELIEVES THAT, TO THE EXTENT A POLITICAL SOLUTION MUST BE SOUGHT, THIS MUST BE DONE BY CIVILIAN OFFICIALS.

4. IT IS ALSO EVIDENT THAT AT LEAST SOME ELEMENTS OF THE ELF ARE NOT RECONCILED TO DEALING WITH THE MILITARY. DURING THE COURSE OF GENERAL AMAN'S VISIT TO TESENEY THIS WEEK, A BOMB WAS REPORTEDLY THROWN AT THE BATTALION HEADQUARTERS THERE. ACCORDING TO LOCAL SOURCES, THE INTENDED VICTIM WAS UNINJURED, BUT THE INCIDENT INTRODUCED AN UNPLEASANTLY SOUR NOTE INTO GENERAL AMAN'S OTHERWISE TRIUMPHANT TOUR OF THE BOONDOCKS. AN ELF REPRESENTATIVE ALSO APPROACHED THE OIC OF OUR RESIDUAL USNAVCOM UNIT THIS WEEK NAIVELY ASKING FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE, INDICATING THAT THE ELF WILL NOT BACK DOWN FROM ITS DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE. HE PROBABLY REPRESENTED THE LOCAL GENERAL COMMAND (GC) FACTION OF THE ELF WHICH IS PRESENTLY BEING UPSTAGED BY THE POPULAR LIBERATION FRONT (PLF). NEEDLESS TO SAY, HE WAS GIVEN NO ENCOURAGEMENT, BUT WE HOPE TO DEVELOP SOME MORE INFORMATION ON THIS ELF INITIATIVE, WHICH WILL BE REPORTED IN DUE COURSE.

5. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, GENERAL AMAN'S VISIT NOW APPEARS UNLIKELY TO PRODUCE ANY APPRECIABLE CHANGES IN THE ERITREAN SITUATION IN ITSELF, ALTHOUGH THE REPORT HE MAKES WILL DOUBTLESS CONTRI-

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BUT TO THE FORMULATION OF WHATEVER POLITICAL INITIATIVES THE GOVGEN-DESIGNATE UNDERTAKES WHEN HE FINALLY DOES ARRIVE IN ASMARA.

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